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Extension Service - United States Department of Agriculture

WARTIME EXTENSION WORK

SUMMARY OF EXTENSION WORK, TECHNIQUES, AND RESULTS BASED ON STATE REPORTS

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Prominent in this week's summary are the progress of farm labor recruitment; successful start of an itinerant-combine program; rehabilitation of flooded farms; and the planting of seventy-five times last year's acreage of hemp in one State.

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ILLINOIS

June 16, 1943

Farm labor. - Estimated that 90,000 workers will be needed in Illinois for 1943 crop season. In addition it is hoped to place 4,500 Victory Farm Volunteers on farms for training this year.

Farm labor committee in every county includes representatives of Extension, USES, AAA, vocational agriculture teachers, public school officials, and usually one or two farmers. In several counties subcommittees also set up in trade centers to inventory local labor and needs of community and fill local requests for labor.

Representative examples of results obtained so far: McLean County has in addition to county labor committee 23 local recruiting and placement centers manned by volunteer high-school principals, vocational agriculture teachers, and representatives of American Legion. These centers placed 237 farm workers in 1 month. In Vermilion County three large canning companies, having total of 860 acres of asparagus, were short 254 workers. After unsuccessful attempt to get labor from southern Illinois, they appealed to State supervisor of emergency labor for help in obtaining release of students from high schools. State and local school officials agreed to make 400 high-school boys and girls available. One school held classes from 12:45 to 5 p.m. so students could work in morning. Each canning company employed man and woman teacher from high schools to supervise students while they worked.

Training school for Women's Land Army applicants held at university. Training given in care and management of poultry, field practice in gardening, pruning of small fruits, principles and practice of water-bath and pressure-cooker canning, and dehydration. Women also instructed in safety measures, health, and physical training. One day spent in observing practice on modern dairy farm. Lectures and discussions on attitudes and relationship problems between woman worker and farm family were part of course. Registrants were recruited through USES. All stated they enrolled for patriotic reasons. Efforts made to locate suitable farms where those who complete course may have further training and experience.

Flood problems. - Reports from farm advisers indicated about 1,403,000 acres of cropland were flooded and over 2,400 farm homes damaged in 38 counties through abnormal rainfall and floodwaters from Wabash, Sangamon, Illinois, and Mississippi Rivers. Estimated 152,000 acres of wheat lost. Corn-planting dates delayed to point that may threaten maturity of part of crop. Rotation pastures, clover and alfalfa meadows are total loss in bottoms in flooded areas.

Farm advisers took immediate steps to help in saving livestock, machinery, seed, and feed. Agricultural college and Extension Service cooperating with State Departments of agriculture and public health, Red Cross, Army, and other agencies in rehabilitation of land, buildings, and equipment, and procuring seeds and needed supplies. Difficult health problem is reconditioning of farm wells in flooded areas. Extension has arranged with implement dealers and distributors to make facilities available for reconditioning of tractors. Cooperative survey of damage to levees under way to determine means to be taken to repair levees and protect land subject to overflow.

Farm advisers using county farm labor organization and school-district leaders to develop program urging farmers affected by flood to pool labor and equipment, and to prepare and plant dry land first, following up on bottom lands as waters recede.

Flood problems affecting farm home also received prompt attention. In Jackson County, Home Adviser Jeannette Dean trained Red Cross canteen class to assist in feeding more than 1,000 refugees. She did such a good job in directing this activity that when military authorities entered flood area she was asked to continue to feed refugees and to purchase food for Army as well. Three other home advisers in flood area directed canteen feeding of 300 to 600 refugees in each county. Program under way for reconditioning and repair of home furnishings and equipment under trained leaders.

Victory Gardens. - Held 25 schools for Victory Garden chairmen - 9 in Chicago area. Five pamphlets on timely garden problems distributed; four others in preparation. State-wide radio program carried on through 16 stations.

In 1942, 202,000 farmers and 600,000 urban residents had gardens; this year urban gardens expected to reach 1 million.

Food preservation and conservation. - Refresher course in methods of food preservation at university was attended by 296 women, including 61 home advisers, as well as Farm Security supervisors, OCD committees, home-economics teachers from normal, high, and grade schools, dietitians, and home economists from public-service companies. Canning equipment, dehydrator, and containers of various types were exhibited. Course was so popular that it was repeated twice in Chicago at request of OCD, for total of 450 women.

Champaign County Nutrition Committee met with county War Board to discuss pressure-cooker rationing and black markets. Grocerymen present stated that black markets in fruits and vegetables were more serious than in meats.

Coles County Board of Supervisors voted to give home adviser use of all equipment of former county canning centers for use in establishing community canning centers. Farm women were hired temporarily to assist with canning demonstrations and to discuss dehydration and other food preservation methods.

Protein feed problems. - Livestock feeders are concerned over inability to obtain needed protein feeds, especially soybean meal, although Illinois is leading soybean-producing State and few months ago surplus of soybean meal was expected. To help solve problem and clarify thinking of all concerned, series of nine district meetings was held for feed mixers, dealers, and farm leaders, under joint auspices of State Feed Industry Council and Extension. Meetings reached total of 988 persons.

Plans made for county meetings to bring program to local feed dealers and feeders. Meetings will help in conservation and better use of proteins in animal feeding. Circular, Priorities for Protein in Animal Production, prepared for distribution through school-district leaders.

Hemp-production program. - Hemp is new crop to most Illinois farmers. Only 600 acres grown in 1942, but this year 75 times as many - 45,000 acres contracted by over 3,000 farmer-producers. To process expected crop, 11 hemp mills will be built in State. Four series of educational meetings on hemp-production methods and practices were held, and series on harvesting methods planned for later in summer. Special circular, Hemp and Illinois War Crops, prepared as guide for growers.

Neighborhood leaders. - Neighborhood-leader pattern for reaching farm families is finding general acceptance among rural people. System has produced good results ever since it started. At summer conference for extension workers, eight farm and home advisers related experiences with neighborhood-leader system. Though results varied, discussion indicated successful meetings depend upon timely subject matter; careful selection and training of leaders; balanced program, including recreation and refreshments; trying out new activities with present program; and giving responsibility and recognition to leaders. Several counties reported organization of new rural units and clubs as direct result of community or school-district meetings.

MINNESOTA
July 1, 1943

Farm labor. - Field contacts established to enroll and place farm workers in Minnesota this fall and winter include 739 volunteer representatives in local trade centers, 91 county agents, 76 emergency county farm labor assistants, and 32 branch offices of USES. Up to July 3 14,072 placements of intrastate workers had been made 3,430 men, 10,083 boys, 313 couples, and 246 women. In addition, 650 Jamaicans were brought into State to work in canning-crop production.

During month 687 city boys were sent to farms from Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth through extension labor program, and 240 more found their own jobs. Reports from employers of boys indicate majority are making good. Four boys' work camps established with total capacity of 292 boys for work in corn de-tasseling and production of canning crops.

In June Extension, USES and WMC directors completed series of eight conferences with county agents, county emergency farm labor assistants, and USES local managers. Purpose was to knit together efforts of Extension and local USES offices, and to obtain full understanding by both agencies as to details of new farm help registration and placement program.

Food conservation. - State-wide program takes information on canning, drying, and storage to rural people. Six home demonstration specialists and all home demonstration agents training neighborhood and food-preservation leaders.

Urban areas served by making training and literature available through OCD; establishing telephone service to answer canning questions; maintaining "best buys" service through metropolitan newspapers and radio stations to encourage full use of seasonal surpluses.

Well over million pieces of literature distributed to further program, including Victory Garden literature, check list of family food needs, folders on canning, drying, freezing, storage, and plan sheet for home-made drier.

Feed conservation. - Distributing 300,000 full-color folders to promote poultry culling campaign to save feed. Feed trade and hatcherymen buying 200,000 copies for distribution through trade channels; remainder given out through neighborhood leaders.

Eight-point dairy program for June concentrated on feed production, increasing legume acreage, both long-time and emergency, planting emergency feed crops in drowned-out fields, harvesting hay crop to best advantage.

Campaign launched to reduce feed waste with hogs by treating for lice, mange, and other parasites.

Potatoes and tomatoes. - Intensive campaign through specialists, publications, press, and radio to head off losses by late blight and leaf-spot. Late-blight folder featuring full-color plates published and distributed to every commercial potato grower in State.

Neighborhood leaders. - Strengthening of neighborhood leader organization important goal of spring months, carried out in terms of leaders assisting in foods and labor programs. Selected staff of specialists assigned to work with supervisors in helping agents perfect labor set-up and neighborhood leader organization.

Labor-saving equipment. - Home-made Victory model hay bucker for truck or tractor built, mounted on truck, and demonstrated in 50 communities; seen by estimated 5,325 carpenters, blacksmiths, and farmers. Large number of blue-print plans distributed.

Weekly newspaper column on farm and home time savers distributed through county extension offices to all Minnesota newspapers and widely published.

SOUTH DAKOTA
July 1, 1943

Farm labor. - County farm labor offices established in 64 counties or combinations of counties to give complete coverage of State. Each area has county farm labor committee, usually composed of county War Board members, representatives of civic organizations, and a few farmers. Program is directed by district extension supervisors.

Governor issued proclamation calling for everyone who can, to help with harvest. Three district mobilization meetings planned to appeal to business people, high-school students, and women to volunteer for farm work. Supply of farm labor has been reasonably adequate during spring and early summer but expected to be short at harvest time. To meet requests from many counties, attempt is being made to obtain prisoners of war, Japanese, and paroled prisoners for farm labor.

Itinerant-combine program. - Extension cooperating with State War Board and Governor's office in program to recruit and place out-of-State combiners. Poster and supply of 1-page leaflets explaining program were mailed to each county War Board, district USES office, and county agent in Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. County agents forward requests from farmers desiring combiners to State War Board office. As combiners enter State they are directed to nearest county War Board office for placement. State War Board office keeps in contact with county offices by telephone and directs combiners to county labor offices making requests for combine service. Removal of all license fees for trucks and knowledge that there is definite program of recruitment and placement are causing larger number of combiners to come north than in previous years.

Sheep-shearing school. - Total of 197 men attended 2-day sheep-shearing schools conducted cooperatively by Extension, State Department of Public Instruction, and Cooperative Wool Growers' Association. It was estimated at least 80 percent of men taking course would shear sheep on home farms and ranches and for other operators. Each enrollee had average of 12.2 hours of instruction. Schools took care of demand for shearers in counties with small flocks.

Foods and nutrition. - Extension nutritionists trained 10 emergency home agents to conduct food preservation demonstrations in canning, drying, brining, and freezing. One or more demonstrations given in every county of State. Circulars prepared on Brining and Salting Vegetables, and on Food Preservation. Refresher institute for home economists on nutrition to aid war effort held in Yankton County.

Clothing. - Extension clothing specialist trained 4-H Club members in 8 counties to help them with problems in clothing renovation, mending, and conservation. Demonstration teams also trained to direct consumer attention to clothing economy in wartime.

